

# Status Overview on the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program Restoration Reserve

July 3, 2000

On March 30, 2000 the Ecosystem Roundtable began discussions of a revised policy for use of the Ecosystem Restoration Program restoration reserve. Because of the level of interest in this topic, discussions were also subsequently held on April 20, 2000 at the Ecosystem Roundtable Issues Subcommittee meeting. This paper attempts to focus key points of agreement and disagreement about the draft policy, and lay out a range of options for moving forward with the policy.

## Points of Agreement

- There was general agreement that the restoration reserve should continue to be available for new projects under limited circumstances as defined in the draft policy, but use of the reserve for this purpose should be minimized.
- There was general agreement that the restoration reserve should be used primarily for amendments for projects that are currently under contract.
- There was general agreement that any new projects funded under the restoration reserve should undergo scientific and technical review comparable to the PSP process.
- There was general agreement that the restoration reserve should be used and maintained for the purposes defined above, as described in the draft restoration reserve policy.

## Points of Disagreement

- The primary point of disagreement about use of the restoration reserve is whether scientific and technical review should be conducted for amendments to existing projects which are currently under contract.

**Discussion.** Some of the issues about requiring scientific and technical review for project amendments include concern that an additional layer of review would be added with corresponding delays and costs. Some feel the contract administrators and the policy decision makers are sufficiently knowledgeable about specific project features to determine if an amendment is warranted. Conducting additional review could result in project delays, work stoppages or unexpected costs. There is concern that conditions imposed as a result of scientific/ technical review or failure to approve an amendment as a result of scientific or technical review could adversely impact the execution of existing contract terms.

It is envisioned that scientific and technical review could provide information to the Ecosystem Roundtable Amendment subcommittee, which could result in increasingly

informed decision making. Some of the benefits associated with requiring scientific and technical review for project amendments include the assurance that reviewers are knowledgeable in the specific scientific or technical area which is being amended and that decision makers can consider this information as part of their decision. Scientific and technical review allows another opportunity for project evaluation and information sharing consistent with CALFED's adaptive management approach. Requiring scientific and technical review of amendments would be consistent with CALFED's project approval process which requires this type of review as part of all other project funding recommendations and approval.

### Options

A number of options have been identified for implementing scientific and technical review. Options include:

- Require all amendments to undergo scientific and technical review.
- Require for all level 2 and 3 amendments to undergo scientific and technical review. No review would be required for level 1 amendments.
- Require scientific and technical review for any amendment that:
  - changes the scope of an existing project by adding new tasks or deliverables,
  - changes the projects location or footprint,
  - extends the time for completing the project to the extent that the scientific or biological outcomes of a project could be changed.
- Do not require scientific or technical review for any amendments.

Additional options were identified during the July 22 Issues Subcommittee meeting.

Depending on the outcome of the discussions regarding the restoration reserve policy, it may be necessary to modify the CALFED contract amendment process to be consistent.